



Brooklyn Jewish Center Review

ON SERVING FIFTY YEARS IN THE RABBINATE

By RABBI ISRAEL H. LEVINTHAL

THE PRIMACY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

By RABBI BENJAMIN Z. KREITMAN

THE NEW AMERICAN JEW

MEDITATION BEFORE KOL NIDRE*

(Prayer by the late Chief Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook)

Take away my shame,	Save me from weakness
Lift my anxiety,	And from faltering
Absolve me of my sin	And from every evil trait,
And enable me to pray before Thee	Illumine my eyes
With gladness of heart,	With the light of Thy deliverance.
To pursue Thy commandments and Thy Torah	Help Thy people,
In the joy of holiness.	Imbue the heart of Thy people with reverence
Grant me	And with awe before Thy majesty.
To bring happiness to all Thy children,	Strengthen them with Thy love,
To exalt and ennoble Thy faithful,	Guide them to walk in the path of Thy righteousness
To spread goodness and mercy	Kindle in their hearts
And blessing in the world.	The light of the holiness of this Day of Holiness
Humble the arrogant	And bring them to possess the inheritance
Who have tried to pervert me with falsehood	Thou has set for them,
While I sought my happiness in serving Thee.	Speedily, speedily, in our time, soon.

Amen.

* From the High Holy Day Prayer Book. Translated and arranged by Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser. Hebrew Publishing Co., New York.

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ABRAHAM MELTZER
Membership Chairman

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THE NEW AMERICAN JEW

(Reprinted from Time Magazine)

When Frederick the Great asked for a proof of God's existence, his Lutheran pastor is said to have given him a two-word answer: "The Jews."

Their mere survival is a miracle of history. Enslaved by the Egyptians, slaughtered by the Philistines, exiled by the Babylonians, dispersed by the Romans, butchered and chivied from country to country in Europe, the Jews not only survived, but also nourished and renewed the religion that undergirds the culture of the Western world. Christian theologians from St. Paul to Paul Tillich have agreed with the Jewish belief that *am olam* (the eternal people were preserved for a divine purpose. Whether or not the hand of God is especially laid upon the Jews, there is every sign that, here and now, they are going through a new kind of testing time.

The problem is that there is no problem—relatively. In contemporary America, the Jews are experiencing unprecedented freedom of a kind they never knew even in ancient Israel or their golden age in Moslem Spain: freedom to adhere to their faith or abandon it, to emphasize their differences or to become invisible. Having learned for 2,000 years how to "sing the Lord's song" in bondage, many Jews are wondering if they will learn how to sing his song in freedom. "The central issue facing Judaism in our day," says Dartmouth's Jacob Neusner, "is whether a long-beleaguered faith can endure the conclusion of its perilous siege."

CULTURE AND COMEDY

In the U.S. today, anti-Semitism is at an all-time low and publicly out of fashion. In most areas of U.S. life, Jewish representation and influence are far higher than the proportion of Jews in the total population—only about 3%. Where once it was a ques-

tion of whether Jews could get a start, it is now only a question of whether they can reach the very top.

Jews are still relatively rare in the executive suites of banks, public utilities and heavy industry (notably automobiles), but they have branched out into many new fields, including electronics and advertising. In politics says New York Senator Jacob Javits rather optimistically, "There is no office now closed to a Jew, including the presidency." At any rate it is no longer surprising to find Jews in the Cabinet, the Supreme Court or the World Series. Residential and social discrimination remains considerable, but not nearly so strong as depicted 18 years ago in *Gentleman's Agreement*. To prep schools and debutante lists, charity boards and private parties, Jews have an entree they never had before.

Among U.S. intellectuals and artists, the Jew has even become a kind of culture hero. Poet Robert Lowell of the Boston Lowells, who boasts "as a saving grace" that he is one-eighth Jewish, declared not long ago that "Jewishness is the theme of today's literature, as the Middle West was the theme of Veblen's times and the South was in the '30s." Suddenly much of American fiction seems to be dominated by Jews: J. D. Salinger, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Edward Lewis Wallant, not to mention the popular novelists less favored by the critics, such as Herman Wouk, Irwin Shaw and Leon Uris. The book on a hundred thousand and coffee tables this year is Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, which reincarnates the old Yiddish *schlemiel* (bungler or fool), as a modern intellectual in search of his identity. No true common denominator exists between these writers, but one explanation for their vogue is that in an age of "alienation" the Jew is looked to as the expert in estrangement—the perpetual outsider who somehow knows how to

keep warm out there. At the same time, in a homogenizing society, the Jewish tradition is increasingly valued as rich and deep; Gentile readers seem to be finding themselves in Jewish fictional characters. Says Novelist Bellow: "I got a great many more letters from people who identified with Herzog in a human way than in a Jewish way."

The outcropping of Jewish creativity also continues in poetry and criticism, painting, music and, as always, entertainment. A clever little inside satire entitled *How to Be a Jewish Mother* has sold 200,000 copies in nine months, a figure that indicates many non-Jews are getting the joke, or at least trying to. Among Gentiles, it is becoming quite in to pepper one's talk with a yiddishism or two ("what chutzpah!"). Jewish humor has become an important part of American folk humor; most of America's top comedians have been Jews, from Eddie Cantor to Mort Sahl. Everyone who comes to New York still wants to see Jewish Actor Zero Mostel play Jewish Author Sholem Aleichem's Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* and Jewish Singer Barbra Streisand play Jewish Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl*. Only a few years ago, Barbra might have been tempted to Anglicize both her name and her profile, while today she triumphs with both.

The superficialities of Jewishness, in short, are getting to be more and more a part of American culture. And—to the consternation of some Jews—vice versa. While the U.S. is growing more Jewish, the U.S. Jews may be growing less so.

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RITUAL AND ISRAEL

The religion of ancient Israel was rigidly exclusive, obsessed with keeping its people separated from the tribes and idolatries that swirled around them. In the Diaspora, the Christians reinforced this separateness with their periodic persecution. The Jewishness that fled to America from the pogroms of Eastern Europe was surrounded by a triple wall of Yiddish language, peculiarity of costume and custom, and deep distrust of the *goyim*—the heathen. No Jew thought of asking himself what a Jew was. A Jew was a Jew.

Some of this attitude still remains. But today the Jew in America often seems like another three-button suit on the commuter train and another pair of slacks in the supermarket, the "church of whose choice" happens to be called a synagogue. What is happening to the Jews in pluralist America is not the rash of assimilation which characterized the liberal period of 19th and early 20th century Germany—until the Nazi holocaust horribly forced the assimilated to resume their Jewish identity. The American process is what sociologists call "acculturation." For the largest Jewish community on earth, the ancient pressure is off, the ancient differences are dying, and the increasingly urgent questions are: "What is a Jew?" and "What do I do about it?"

U.S. Jews are answering the question in various ways:

• "I BELONG TO A SYNA-GOGUE." A generation ago, the majority of U.S. Jews were not affiliated with a synagogue; now the situation is reversed. This does not necessarily bespeak an uprush of piety, any more than the parallel Protestant and Roman Catholic boom. It may simply be a part of the American feeling that everybody is supposed to belong to something. Like their Protestant counterparts, the new synagogues go in heavily for activities: discussion groups, dances, bazaars, marital counseling, softball teams. And the differences in ritual are blurring between rigid Orthodox, liberalized Reform and compromise Conservative. Belonging to a synagogue does not mean attending it. Most surveys indicate a weekly attendance rate of about 25%, compared to about 40% for Protestants and 71% for Catholics.

• "I WANT THE KIDS TO KNOW THEY ARE JEWISH." One reason for the relatively low synagogue attendance may be that so much of the religious side of Jewishness centers on the home. It is in following or omitting the minutely prescribed prayers and dietary laws, Sabbath rules and holiday ceremonials that the Jew affirms, or fails to affirm, his faith. The extent of this observance is impossible to measure; the majority of American Jews probably omit most of it, but try to keep something—if only the Passover seder. Many American Jewish homes are familiar with "the Christmas crisis": whether or not to deprive young children of the universal pleasure of that Christian holiday. Some households solve the problem syncretically—here and there, Stars of David have been known to top Christmas trees, and Hanukkah, the relatively minor Festival of Lights commemorating the Jews' miraculous victory over the Syrians in 165 B.C., has been elevated into a gift-giving, card-sending counterpart to Christmas. The once relatively low-keyed *bar mitzvah*, at which the 13-year-old is formally received into the Jewish community, has grown to awesome proportions, with food, entertainment and gifts often rivaling a Babylonian banquet. There has also been a notable increase in the study of Hebrew among the young. The children of any immigrant generation usually move away from the old rites as alien, but a growing segment of the next generation finds delight in them; "what the parents are trying to forget," goes a saying, "the children are trying to remember."

• "I GIVE TO ISRAEL TILL IT HURTS." Israel is the great new fact of Jewish existence. Since 1948, American Jews have poured about a billion and a half dollars into the new state, although only a few thousand have answered ex-Premier Ben-Gurion's call to become Israeli citizens. Israelis are sometimes skeptical of such vicarious participation in their pioneering and have been known to call their American brethren "alimony Jews"—willing to pay but not to live with it. The

emergence of a tough state of modern Maccabees has tremendously strengthened Jewish morale, pride and prestige in a warrior-loving world. For 20 centuries, returning to Jerusalem was only a dim hope of Jewish prayers; now that it is a material, political fact, the question arises how it will affect Jewish spirituality and the complex relations between the homeland and the Jews of the Diaspora.

• "I HOPE HE DOESN'T MARRY A GENTILE." Marriage to a non-Jew is a traditional taboo. Today, in the eyes of most Jewish parents, and particularly grandparents, inter-marriage is still something of a calamity. The desire to curb mixed dating partly accounts for the "5 o'clock shadow" that falls on interfaith group activities. But all surveys indicate that intermarriage is rising. A study of Washington's Jewish community (81,000) broke down the rate of intermarrying Jewish men by generations: 1.4% for the foreign-born 10.2% for the first generation of American-born, 17.9% for the second. And the rate for the college-educated members of the last group was a startling 37%. Moreover, the Jewish birth rate has remained stable in the last 40 years, while the rest of the nation's has been generally rising. The optimistic view of intermarriage is that it is bringing valuable new blood to Judaism. Besides, Sociologist Marshall Sklare notes that in the anti-Semitic past the intermarrying Jew was likely to be seeking status; today it is the Gentile who may be striving upward, as "the tastes, ideas, cultural preferences and life-styles preferred by many Jews are coming to be shared by non-Jews." Many a bright Gentile college girl is attracted to Jewish men because of their intellectual and liberal attitudes. A growing number of Gentiles who marry Jews convert to Judaism—and, like most converts, tend to be stricter than their mates. In Los Angeles, for instance, two schools of instruction for converts function full time. Judaism traditionally declines to seek converts, but with a little proselytizing push, some Jewish leaders feel, conversions might eventually offset losses.

TEXTBOOKS AND DIVORCE

The Jewish "life-style" is hardly uniform, but one of its basic features remains the traditional respect for learning, transferred from the Torah to the textbook. Proportionately more than twice as many Jews go to college than all Americans. Other familiar Jewish traits are showing signs of erosion. The sober Jew is not quite as sober as he used to be. Jews still drink less than Gentiles. One accounting firm reports that it can always spot a Jewish country club by examining the books; at the Jewish club, the food bills are much higher than the liquor bills, while at the Gentile club, it's the other way round. But studies indicate that the Jews' traditional temperance decreases with relaxation of Orthodox observances and increased social relations with non-Jews.

Ostentation born of insecurity remains an undeniable fact, and Miami is its monument; but there is now enough old money and new taste in the U.S. Jewish community to tone down the garishness. The Jewish divorce rate is still relatively low, but rising, and the modern Jewish family is far from the warm, amniotic unit it used to be. Nor is the modern Jewish mother the same half-funny, half-formidable injustice collector of old; she is inclined to be even more psychology-oriented than everyone else, and trying to avoid the coddling, overfeeding stereotype Momma.

SUBURBS AND MESSIAH

The U.S. has never forced Jews to live in ghettos, but the Jews have often created them voluntarily. Virtually every big city has distinct Jewish neighborhoods and suburbs. In part, this phenomenon is dictated by remaining anti-Semitic discrimination. Kept out of country clubs, Jews often set up "separate but more than equal" clubs of their own; frozen out of a debutante cotillion, they have been known to give their daughters a quasi-debut by presenting the girls to the Israeli ambassador. But some of this protective clinging together may be unnecessary. A recent study of a typical Midwestern upper-middle-class suburb found that 80% of resident

Gentiles had no objection to having Jews in the community, and only 23% of these said they preferred their Jewish neighbors to remain in the minority.

Ironically, although Jewish intellectuals have been leading champions of Negro rights, there is much potential tension between Jews and Negroes. Slum Negroes tend to distrust Jewish landlords and merchants. On the other hand, some Jews wonder whether the Negroes' drive to batter down all barriers by political pressure (whereas the Jews have traditionally worked their way up via money and education) is undermining the pluralistic concept. Sociologist Nathan Glazer remarks that Jews will not easily welcome Negro incursion into "the true seats of Jewish exclusiveness"—business, union, neighborhood and school.

In general, though, there is a new spirit between the faiths, a refreshing decline of self-consciousness on both sides. It is a spirit that does not deny the differences between Jew and Gentile (as the liberalism of an earlier time did) but accepts the differences with mutual respect and enjoyment.

The churches have been pioneers of this new spirit. New Christian interest in the Old Testament, Christian guilt at the Nazi persecution and Christian intimation of minority status in the world at large have brought them closer to Jews than they have been perhaps since the first centuries of Christianity. "The Jews have the promise of God," writes Protestant Theologian Karl Barth, "and if we Christians from among the Gentiles have it too, then it is only as those chosen with them, as guests in their house, as new wood grafted onto their old tree."

The old tree is still somewhat suspicious of the new wood. But some of the same events and trends that have moved Christian scholars back to the Old Testament have moved young Jews back to the Bible—not as something to be reinterpreted and explained, but as the Word of God, to be confronted head on. This confrontation is not primarily with the minutiae of the Law but with the God of the Covenant and with the expectation of the Messiah's coming for the transformation of mankind. There is a growing awareness that without the light of religion, neither United Jewish Appeal, nor vacations in Israel,

nor psychoanalysis, nor Phi Beta Kappa will keep the word Jewish from watering down in America to something as unspecific as the word Protestant can be.

At the same time, Jewishness is far more than religion; it is an inextricable mixture of faith, nationhood and culture. It is an order of being perhaps more than of believing. Being Jewish is feeling the past in one's bones and living all out in the present; it is Job's *chutzpah* as well as his submission to God; it is the lingering melancholy which the 12th century writer Judah Halevi called the "aching heart of nations," and it is sharp humor, often directed at oneself. For all his changes, the American Jew has not lost these qualities; in fact he is making them, more than ever, a gift to the world.

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ON SERVING FIFTY YEARS IN THE RABBINATE

RABBI ISRAEL H. LEVINTHAL

At the annual Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America in 1964, a Dinner was tendered in honor of the Rabbis who have served in the Rabbinate for 50 years or longer. Rabbi Levinthal was chosen to be the speaker at that function. Because of the acclaim the address received, and because of its relevancy today, we are certain that our members will be glad to read it. It was published in the 1964 Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly. Ed.

I need hardly tell you that I appreciate the great honor conferred upon me in having been asked to speak at this notable occasion. I do not understand why this honor came to me. I am not the oldest in years, and certainly not the oldest in wisdom. If anyone deserved this honor, it is our beloved friend, colleague and teacher, Professor Mordecai Kaplan, who is the *av b'shanim v'av b'hokhmoh*. But as a good soldier I accepted the assignment and I only pray to our Heavenly Father that I may prove myself worthy of this occasion.

I know that I speak for all of the rabbis who are being honored today when I say that we are deeply grateful to you for taking cognizance of the fact that we have served at least fifty years, and some of us much longer, in the American rabbinate. Having achieved this age—we must be old to have served at least fifty years—I think we have reached the stage that Lord Beconsfield describes as the period for “reminiscing.” And so I want to reminisce with you for a little while.

It is good to recall the former years. *Z'khor y'mos olom*. “Remember the days of old,” we are told. *Binu sh'nos dor vodor*, and, as I like to translate the second part, “consider the changes of every generation.”

And what a change it is between the days when we were students in the Seminary and the early years of our rabbinate, and the years in which most of you were students and these years when you are serving as rabbis.

In those early years we had no dormitory, with which you were blessed. Especially those of us who came from out of town had to search for a room in which to lodge. We had a problem of eating. I remember the hardship endured, especially for the meat meal, until finally a good, kind, old lady volunteered to cook for a small group of us. We had the same menu every day in the week, but we did not complain. We were very, very happy to get it.

When we graduated there was no Placement Commission, as there is now, to look after us. We were on our own. And there were no positions; in all the land there was just a handful of congregations. Oh, how hard it was to get a position, and what salaries, what pittance they offered! And we were glad to get that, just enough to keep body and soul together.

Often I smile when I read how young rabbis complain how hard they have to work today in the rabbinate. My dear young colleagues, we had no principals for our Hebrew schools in those years. We were the principals—in addition to preaching twice every week. In my first two positions, and even in my Brooklyn Jewish Center, I was the principal until almost my fiftieth year. And we had no executive directors, because such a creature was not even born yet. We had to do all the work. We were the *kol bo*. Everything, every phase of the work had to be done by us.

When I think of what we had to do, I am reminded of a statement in the Talmud (Tal. Jer. *Yebamot* XII: 13a). *Anshei semonia*, the people of the town of Semonia, came to a distinguished rabbi and said to him: *ten lonu bar nash, sheyiye doresh, dayan, sopher, hazan, misniyan, v'avid kol zorkhona*. “Give us a man who will be a preacher, a judge, a teacher of our little children, a superintendent of our synagogue, an instructor of our adults, one who will take care of all our needs.”

That was our life in those early years of our rabbinate. Again, when I compare our early life and the life

of the new young rabbis, especially the rabbis in the last two decades. I am reminded of another statement, by Ben Zoma (*Berakhot* 58a). He compares his life and the life of Adam, the first man on earth: *Kamo y'gios yoga odom harishon ad she-motzo pat lehem l'ekhol*. “How much trouble, how much labor poor Adam had to indulge in until he found a piece of bread to eat. He had to plow and plant and sow and reap and grind and knead and bake,” *v'ahar kakh okhal*, “and only then did he have a piece of bread to eat,” *va'ani ashkim umotze kol dovor mukhan*, “and I arise in the morning and find all prepared for me!” And consider what Adam had to do in order to have a garment to wear. He had to shear the sheep and spin and weave. Only then did he have a garment to wear, *va'ani ashkim umotze kol dovor mukhan*.

That is the difference between your generation and our generation. You have *kol dovor mukhan*, everything prepared for you; we had to labor so hard in order to create the instruments to help us achieve results.

Worst of all, how very unprepared those Jews were in our early days for this type of Conservative rabbi. He was something new on the American scene. The people could not even understand the need for that kind of rabbi. And we had to create the demands for such a rabbi.

Today, you have Jews who want a synagogue; no matter what their motive is, they want a synagogue. As soon as they move into a community, they feel the need of a synagogue. They want their children to go to Hebrew school, so they feel the need for a Hebrew school. We had to create that desire and that understanding. How I used to plead on bended knee to a parent to send his child to our Hebrew school and to join a congregation! We had to beg and beg and plead. I say to you, you have it all *mukhan*!

We speak in praise of the *halutzim* in Israel, and well we may, because they found a land that the Bible describes as *eretz asher avoneho barzel*, “a land whose stones are iron” (Deut. 8:9). Spiritually speaking, my dear friends, that correctly portrays Jewish life in America in the day of our early ministry. It was a soil whose

stones were iron. You might ask me: *bameh heerakhtho yomim*, how could you live so long under those conditions, how could you survive all those years (in my case it is fifty-four years), how could you have endured all the hardships? I would answer in the words of the rabbis who interpreted that very text: *al tikro avoneho elo boneho*, "do not read *avoneho*, its stones, but *boneho*, its builders" (*Taanit* 4a). Its builders were of *barzel*, of iron spirit, of iron determination!

We had that spirit. We had to have it or we would have been crushed. There were other professions that offered much greater opportunities and rewards. These men entered the rabbinate knowing these conditions, because they wanted to serve. They were dedicated to this ideal.

I want to pay tribute now, and I think we ought to pay tribute, to the wives of these men, to the rebbitzens of these *halutzim* in the American rabbinate. If a young man made a sacrifice in entering the rabbinate of those years, I assure you that the young woman who married a rabbi then made a greater sacrifice. It was a greater sacrifice to be a rebbitzen in those years. All of them deserve our tribute. I know the wives of these men, practically all of them. I want to repeat a word that I used at a recent dinner with which my own Center honored me at the close of my seventy-fifth year, when I paid tribute to Mrs. Levinthal, and which I know may be applied to these rebbitzens, including Mrs. Ginzberg!*

In the story of Queen Esther when she resolved to appear before King Ahasuerus to plead for her people, the Bible specifically describes the preparations she made for that important audience. The Bible states the description with the words: *Vatilbash Esther malkhus*. It is usually rendered in all English translations that "Esther garbed herself with the garments of royalty." But the Hebrew text does not say that at all. It does not say *bigdei malkhus*, "garments of royalty," but only *malkus*, which has an altogether different meaning. Es-

ther garbed herself with *malkhus*, the dignity of royalty. *Vatilbash Esther malkhus*. It was the royal dignity with which she bore herself that made the impression. And I can honestly say, not only of Mrs. Levinthal, but of all these earlier rebbitzens that they garbed themselves with the dignity of the royalty of the rebbitzen. And in that way they helped us tremendously!

There is one further difference between our generation and the generation of most of you who are here today. We had to serve the first generation of the American immigrant Jews. They were concerned about their children, 'tis true, but they themselves had yet the tradition of the Old World. Many of them had the learning of the Old World. In my own congregations at Petach Tikvah and at the Brooklyn Jewish Center, I was particularly blessed with many men who had studied in the old Yeshivot, who were *maskilim*. They cherished and longed for those traditions.

Most of you are serving the second generation and even the third generation. I know one of my older Jews who moved to a suburb and later came to visit us. I asked him how he liked it in the new synagogue and he said, "I do not as yet feel at home there. I am the only man there with gray hair." The new congregations today consist of young people for the most part. They do not have the old learning. They want to be Jews, which is very good. But for us, forty or fifty years ago, it was a much more difficult problem.

All of my people came from congregations where they had been served by the classic type of Jewish rabbi. In my own Center it was a union between Brownsville Jews and Williamsburg Jews. Brownsville Jews were served by rabbis, such as the distinguished father of our distinguished Chancellor, Rabbi Simon Finkelstein, *zikhrono livrokh*; and the Jews who came from Williamsburg also came from congregations where they were served by the old type classic rabbi whom I used to meet in my father's home. They knew my name and I knew their names. It wasn't easy to serve the two—the old generation of that type and the younger generation, American-born, who also came and wanted to be served.

I am reminded of a very beautiful comment that an Orthodox rabbi used at the memorial meeting for my sainted father, *zikhrono livrokh*, a few weeks after his funeral.

It happened to be around the *Sidrah of Noah*, so this rabbi quoted the first verse: *noah ish tzaddik tomim hoyoh b'dorosov*. "Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations." "Why does the text say: *b'dorosov*, in his generations, in the plural?" he asked. A man lives only in one generation. "But the text wants to tell us," he continued, "that the *tzaddik*, the real spiritual leader, must live in two generations. He must be able to talk to the young as well as to the old."

It was a beautiful interpretation, and I appreciated it when applied to my father. Those of you who knew him, know that it was true of him. I tried, and many of my colleagues tried, to follow that teaching. I never permitted myself to alienate myself from the old, though at the same time I tried to win and attract the young.

In my own case, I want to say that I won the hearts of the older generation by the Jewishness of my sermons. I did not try to compete in *halakhah* with the old rabbis of that generation, because I knew my limitations.

But my people saw in me at least a type of the old when they heard those beautiful *agadot* that God granted me the gift of finding, and I could see the gleam in their eyes when I would give a good interpretation of a Midrashic text. In their surprise and joy, they used to go back to their old congregations and tell the old rabbis what they had heard from a young Seminary rabbi.

I won their hearts because I reattached them to the sources of their spiritual and cultural strength. And, at the same time, and this I say to you younger men, by that same method I attracted the younger generation as well. We make a mistake when we think that the young don't want that kind of teaching and preaching. They thirst and hunger for it. To them, it is the bread of their Jewish life and, alas, many of us offer them cake. They yearn for that nourishing bread.

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*The wife of the late Professor Louis Ginzberg, of blessed memory, who presided at the function.



NEWS OF THE CENTER

NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM OFFICERS AND STAFF

ON THE eve of the Jewish New Year 5726, the officers of the Brooklyn Jewish Center extend to all the members and friends of our institution their best wishes for a year of health, happiness and joy. May we, together with all mankind, be blessed with peace and prosperity.

In this hour, as the New Year is ushered in, we, the officers of this Institution, take this opportunity of thanking all our members for their devotion and loyalty to our Center. We are confident that with the co-operation of our membership the year 5726 will be crowned with new achievements and success in our work on behalf of our community and our people.

L'shonoh Tovo Tikosevu!

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From the Center Staff

On behalf of the Center Staff I extend to the rabbis, officers, directors and members of the Brooklyn Jewish Center and their families cordial greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

DAVID M. GOLD,
Executive Director.

From the Sisterhood

The officers of the Sisterhood extend heartiest New Year Greetings to

all of our members and their families. Sisterhood looks back with pride and satisfaction on its activities during the year 5725 and hopes for an even more successful season in 5726.

With best wishes for a *Shono Tova Umesuka.*

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From the Men's Club

The year 5726 will be a hallmark in our short history. It marks the end of our sabbatical year and puts us on the threshold of a new and more active period. We invite all to participate in our expanded program during this New Year and the years to come.

To all of our members, their families and friends we extend our best wishes for a healthy and happy year of peace. May we be inscribed in the book of life.

Louis Kramer, *President*

Theodore D. Ostrow, *Hon. Pres.*

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SABBATH WORSHIP

Week of September 24

Kindling of Candles: 6:31 P.M.

Services: 6:00 P.M.

SABBATH MORNING SERVICES

September 25 — 8:15 A.M.

Sidrah: "Nitzavim"

Deuteronomy: 29:9-30:20

Prophets: Isaiah 61:10-63:9

RABBI KREITMAN

will preach



SAT. LATE AND DAILY

Minha Services: 7:40 P.M.

Followed by Maariv

DAILY SERVICES:

Mornings: Monday through Friday
7:00 and 8:00 A.M.

Sunday mornings: 8:30 A.M.
(one minyan)

Holiday Gym Schedule

The Gym and Baths Department will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, September 27 and 28 for the Rosh Hashanah holiday and will reopen on Wednesday afternoon, September 29 at 3:00 o'clock for men. On Tuesday, October 5 (Erev Yom Kippur) the department will be open for men and boys from 12-3 P.M.; will be closed Wednesday, October 6 and reopen Thursday, October 7 for women at 10 A.M.

HIGH HOLY DAYS SERVICES

MAIN SYNAGOGUE

Rosh Hashanah

Services for Rosh Hashanah will be held on Sunday and Monday evenings, September 26 and 27 at 6:30 o'clock; on Monday and Tuesday mornings, September 27 and 28, at 7:30 o'clock. The Torah reading will commence at 9:10 A.M. The shofar will be sounded on September 28 at 10:10 A.M. All worshippers are requested to be in their seats before that hour. The sermon on both days will be preached at about 10:30 A.M. The doors will be closed while the sermon is delivered. The Musaf services will begin at 11:00 o'clock, and the services will finish at approximately 1:15 o'clock.

Rosh Hashanah Sermons

The sermons will be preached on both days of Rosh Hashanah at 10:30 o'clock.

Rabbi Levinthal will preach on the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Kreitman will preach the sermon on the second day.

Yom Kippur

The Kol Nidre services which usher in the Fast of Yom Kippur will be held on Tuesday evening, October 5, at 6:25 o'clock.

Yom Kippur services will begin on Wednesday morning, October 6, at 8:00 o'clock. The Yizkor service will be held at 11:15 A.M.

On Yom Kippur Eve, the sermon by Rabbi Levinthal will be preached immediately after the chanting of Kol Nidre. On Yom Kippur morning, the sermon by Rabbi Kreitman will follow the Memorial Services.

Cantor and Choir to Officiate in Main Synagogue

Our Cantor, Rev. William Sauler, will officiate at the services to be conducted on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the main synagogue. He will be assisted by the Center Choir under the direction of Mr. Samuel Scheraga.

AUDITORIUM

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah services will be held in the Auditorium Sunday and Monday evenings, September 26 and 27, at 6:30 P.M. and on Monday and Tuesday mornings, September 27 and 28, at 7:30 A.M. Rev. Bernard Gewirtz will officiate.

Sermons

The sermons will be delivered by Rabbi Kreitman on the first day and by Mr. Max I. Cohen on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Kreitman will deliver the sermon at the Kol Nidre services in the Auditorium and on Yom Kippur. Rabbi Kreitman will preach after the Yizkor services.

Yom Kippur

The following schedule of services will prevail in the Auditorium:

Kol Nidre Services — Tuesday evening, October 5, at 6:25 P.M.

Yom Kippur Services — Wednesday, October 6, will begin at 8:00 A.M., Torah Reading will be at 10:30 A.M., Yizkor services will begin at 11:15 A.M., Musaf services will start at 12:00 P.M. Study Session 3:00 P.M., Minha services will be held at 4:30 P.M. The sermon will be delivered at 11:30 A.M. Neilah services will begin at 5:15 P.M.

Candle Lighting During High Holy Days

Candles will be lit for the Rosh Hashanah holidays on Sunday and Monday evenings, September 26 and 27 at 6:28 P.M.

On Tuesday evening, October 5, (Kol Nidre Eve) candles will be lit at 6:13 P.M.

Additional Yizkor Services

For the benefit of the community, the Center will conduct special Yizkor services on Yom Kippur, Wednesday morning, October 6, in the Dining Room of our building. There will be three such services, at 10:00 o'clock, 10:30 and 11:00.

YOUTH CONGREGATIONS

The Rosh Hashanah services in the Junior Congregation will be held on Monday and Tuesday, September 27 and 28, at 10:00 A.M.

The Kol Nidre services will be held on Tuesday evening, October 5, at 6:25 o'clock.

The services on Yom Kippur will be held Wednesday morning, October 6, at 10:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Children's Congregation

In addition to the Junior Congregation Services in the Prayer Room, there will be a special children's service for boys and girls under 11 years of age attending our Schools.

Admission will be free to pupils of our schools under 11. These services will be held in the Dining Room as per the following schedule: Rosh Hashanah at 11:00 A.M., Yom Kippur at 12 Noon.

CHILDREN'S

and

JUNIOR CONGREGATIONS

meet regularly

EACH SABBATH AND HOLIDAY

All children and young adults are welcome.

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IN OUR

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Happy New Year*

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RESERVE

THURSDAY EVENING

OCTOBER 28, 1965

for our

ANNUAL MEETING

Election of Officers

* Annual Report by our President,
Mr. Emanuel Cohen

* Refreshments and Entertainment

Social Hour

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DANCE**

Sponsored by the
ADULT LEAGUE
to be held

**Wednesday Night, Oct. 6, 1965
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Dancing to the Continuous Music of
**MURRAY BAUM
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Contribution \$3.00 Free Refreshments

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ON SERVING 50 YEARS

continued from page 7

I have had many, many experiences which proved to me the truth of that fact. Some of our men make the great mistake of dispensing with the Jewish sermon. They say we have to lecture to our people, not to sermonize; we have intellectuals, we must appeal to their minds.

Of course you have to appeal to their minds and you have to give them lectures and conduct discussions. But you have all the other days in the week for that, sufficient and appropriate time for lectures and discussions for those Jews who seek lectures. But for the vast majority, for the intellectuals as well as for the unlearned, *divrei agadot* is so important. No wonder the rabbis tell us *divrei agadot moshkhim et ha-lev*. "The Aggadic teachings of the Rabbis tend to draw the heart of man, they attract the heart" (*Shabbat* 87a), and it is through the heart that you can reach the mind, especially on he Sabbath.

On the Sabbath when the Jew has the *n'shomah y'seirol*, the additional soul, when he does come to the synagogue, you want to refresh that soul.

The Talmud tells us that Rabbi Yohanan *v'Resh Lakish m'ayney b'sifrei agadato b'shabbos*. "These two great rabbis, Rabbi Yohanan and Resh Lakish, would concentrate on the books of the *agadata* on the Sabbath" (*Gittin* 60a). I can very well understand it. The Sabbath was the time for it, and if it was the time for the Jews of those early ages, it certainly is the time for the average Jew today.

A few years ago I read in *Time* magazine an interview with the great Christian preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick. He was celebrating his eightieth birthday at that time. The interview dealt with various phases of his ministry, but then the reporter came to the subject of the sermon. Fosdick, as you know, was known as one of the greatest Christian preachers of his age.

The reporter said to him, "Why is it that no many people find sermons dull?" I quote now from *Time* magazine. "Dr. Fosdick offered a wise, gentle explanation of why so many sermons are boring. The business of an essay is elucidation. The business of a sermon is transformation. Some sermons are deadly dull because they

are just essays on pious subjects, not sermons."

It is this very thought that the rabbi has in mind. I am convinced, and I know that all the men of my generation are convinced that it was only through the Jewishness of the sermon that we could sense the true meaning of the words which, according to the Rabbis, God spoke to Moses: *Heheysani bidvorcho*. "You have made Me live again through the power of your words!" (*Berakhot* 32a).

You will forgive me, I trust, if I take just a few moments to give you a brief summary of a sermon I preached last Passover. I know it is rather presumptuous on my part to try to preach to rabbis—critical as they are—and rather dangerous. But I trust that you will not think of me as a certain gentleman regarded an English Bishop, about whom the following story is told. This Bishop liked his food very well spiced, so he used to carry with him a bottle of strong pepper sauce. He would not rely on the peppers furnished in the hotel. One day as he was sitting in the dining room of a hotel, a gentleman sitting opposite him said, "Please pass the peppers this way." The Bishop replied: "That is my private property." "Well," said the man, "let a fellow taste it, anyway." So the Bishop gave it to him, and after tasting it the man said to him, "You are a minister?" "Yes," was the immediate reply. "And do you believe in Hell?" the man questioned again. "I certainly do," the Bishop answered emphatically. The man looked at him and then said: "I have met your kind before, but I never met one who carried his samples with him!"

Please do not think of me as one who carries the sample of his profession with him. However, I do this because it will illustrate the thought that I am trying to convey to you. On the seventh day of Passover I preached on the text: "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song." And I quoted this beautiful and strange Midrash: *Miyom shebora hakodosh borukh hu es olomo*, "From the time that God created the World" (mind you, from the beginning of time) *v'ad she-amdu yisrael al hayam*, "And until that very day when the Israelites stood at the banks of the Red Sea," *lo motzinu she'omru shiroh*, "we do

not find anyone singing before God" (*Exodus Rabbah*, 23:4).

I put the question: "How is it possible that not one of the great men—Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—ever sang a song to God?" The Midrash even tells us that Adam was the author of the 92nd Psalm—*Mizmor shir Pyom hashabbat*. So evidently he did sing.

What the rabbis meant, I thought, was that this was a different kind of song. No one before sang such a song. It was a *shiro hadosho shibbhu g'ulim*. "It was a new song that the redeemed sang."

Others sang before, but it was an individual singing, a *shirat yahid*. An individual had it good, so he expressed his feelings with joy in song. But here, for the first time you have a *shirat rabbim*, a whole people singing of deliverance. What a difference it makes when a whole people can sing a song of joy.

The Midrash continues: When God heard the whole people sing their song of freedom, He said: *L'eilu hoyisi m'tzapeh*, "For this I have been waiting" (*ibid*), not merely for an individual but for a whole people to sing a song of freedom!

And I developed the thought that this rabbinic comment reveals to us the true meaning of what we behold in today's world of revolt. Wherever you turn, you see the masses in the process of revolution.

What is the meaning of these revolutions among peoples long ruled by colonial powers, the revolt of the Negroes here in America, or the determined effort of the Jews in their struggle for *Eretz Yisrael*? All of these people had *y'hidim*, individuals, who were able to sing. Among the colonial peoples there were individuals who were favorites of the colonial governments, who had it very good, and who indeed could sing. Among the American Negroes there have been individuals who rose to wealth, to power, and they can sing. And even among the Jews in the Galut, there were individuals, *Hoffjuden*, who were able to sing.

But now a new day is dawning. The whole group, the entire people wants to sing. They are not satisfied with their *yehidim* able to sing, they want to sing *yahad kulom*, all together, for the gift of their people's freedom.

Another Rabbi put an additional touch to this beautiful midrash. He

connects the words *oz yoshir* of our text to the words *nakhon hisakho me'oz*, "Thy throne stands firm *me'oz*, from the old," literally, "from then" (Psalms 93:2; Exodus Rabbah 23:1). We usually translate the words to mean that God's throne was established from the old, from the beginning of time. But this Rabbi translates the phrase to mean: "Even though Thou art from eternity, Thy throne was not firmly established and Thou wast not fully recognized in Thy world until *oz yashir*, until all the children of Israel were able to sing this song of freedom."

In these revolutions we are witnessing the eventual triumph of religion. God's throne will be firmly established, and God Himself will be fully recognized, when the purpose of these revolutions will be realized. Only then will the function of religion be fulfilled, when all the peoples of the world will be able to sing a song of freedom.

Now, my dear friends, as I told you, it was not my purpose to give you a sample of my profession. What I did want to relate was the after-effects of the sermon. After the service, the people come to you, as you know, and give you *y'yasher koakh*. Some give you a warmer one, some a cooler one. I have learned how to take these congratulatory remarks. I am my own severest critic. I know when I preach a poor sermon and I think I know when I preach a good sermon. This time, however, I was impressed. A young man came up to me, one whom I had never seen before. He introduced himself to me, and said that he was brought to the service by another congregant. I asked him his name and asked him what he does. He is a teacher of physics in a college. He congratulated me and said, "Rabbi, I want to thank you. It is the first time that I heard our ancient Rabbis having something specific to say about a problem that confronts the world today."

I appreciated that comment and I told him so. As we walked out a little later, a few others shook my hand. A young woman came to me and also gave me a warm *y'yasher koakh*. This young woman was a school teacher. She spoke practically the same words that the young man had said, and they did not know each other. "Rabbi, I want to thank you. It was so good to hear that the Rabbis of old have

something to say about problems that concern us so much today."

This was the value of these rabbinic interpretations. They revitalized the message of Judaism. In my own humble way, I made the old teachings of the masters live again, and it gave the people a new respect for the teachings of these rabbis. Judaism was not then in their eyes a fossil that spoke only of thousands of years ago. It had a message for our day as well.

I must touch upon one further quality that we rabbis of the earlier years possessed. We had to possess it, otherwise we would have been spiritually frustrated. We had patience with our people. It is a quality that a true leader of his people must possess. I recall reading in the newspaper recently of a rabbi in Long Island who left the rabbinate and who, in an interview, gave the reason for his resignation from his position. He was leaving the rabbinate because, he said, it was a useless task that faced him. "I see that I cannot change the people." If that were a valid reason, the great prophets should have resigned, and Moses himself should have had to surrender his leadership. A leader must have patience with his people. No people is transformed overnight.

You have to love the people and be patient with them. Not that we did not have our moments of discouragement. We did, many a time. Not that we were not pessimistic at times. But we always remembered Ahad HaAm's advice, "Be a pessimist for the present, but an optimist for the future!"

What preserved us and gave us strength was that we were optimists, and thought of the future. We had that gift of patience which God advised Moses to have, when he became for a moment impatient with his people: *Am zeh she'ani mosar lohh tinokos hem*. "These people whom I have entrusted in your care, they are as yet little children." *Al takpid aleihen al mah shehem osin*, "Do not become impatient; do not get angry with them on account of what they are doing. Even their Master does not become impatient with them, as it is written: For Israel is a youth and I love him!" (*Yalkut Shimoni* to Hosea 11:1; cf. *Tanhuma B'shalah*, 22.) It was that quality of patience which helped us to carry on, and which can help you to carry on your duties.

Having served for fifty years and more as rabbis, we are, of course, old now. We are somewhat tired and fatigued. And yet, if you ask me whether it was worthwhile, this struggle and sacrifice, let me answer your question as I answered it to my own congregation at that same dinner when they celebrated my seventy-fifth birthday. I recalled to them that there are three books in the Bible which, according to tradition, were written by King Solomon. There is *Shir Hashirim*, the Song of Songs, that beautiful song of love, perhaps the greatest love poem in all literature. There is *Mishlei*, the Book of Proverbs, the book of wisdom, in which the wise Solomon enshrined the wisdom of his rich experience. Then there is *Koheles*, Ecclesiastes, that book of pessimism which says: *Havel havalim, hahal hevel*, "vanity of vanities, it is all vanity," nothing is worthwhile.

The rabbis add an interesting touch. They tell when Solomon wrote these books: *Shir Hashirim* he wrote when he was a young man. That is the time for love. *Mishlei* he wrote in middle age, when the mind is fertile and rich, and when one is able to think of words of wisdom. *Koheles* he wrote when he was an old man, when the temptation is to say *havel havalim*, all is vanity (*Midrash Shir Hashirim*, 1:10).

Judged by these standards, I honestly feel that I am not yet old. I can still appreciate *Shir Hashirim*. Thank God, my mind can still create and produce words of *Mishlei*. The very fact that on my seventy-fifth birthday I was able to publish a volume of sermons, shows that God has been good to me, that my mind at least is not yet old. And, as far as *Koheles* is concerned, I can truthfully say that I am not ready to say, *havel havalim*.

I still believe with all my heart in the worthwhileness of the Jewish life. And I still believe with all my heart in the worthwhileness of the rabbinate. I still regard it as the greatest calling that any Jew is privileged to assume. I know that I speak for all my colleagues who are honored today when I say that we all pray to our Father in Heaven that He may grant us and all our dear ones life, health and strength, so that we may be able to continue to serve our faith and our people for many, many more years to come!

THE PRIMACY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

A Sermon on the Sidrah Ki Tavo

by DR. BENJAMIN Z. KREITMAN

Because of the relevancy of the subject we are publishing this sermon originally delivered at the Zionist Organization of America's 64th annual Convention, September 2, 1961. This sermon was published in a subsequent issue of the American Zionist. The text of the sermon is the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, the Haftarah of the Sabbath Ki Tavo.

It is a meaningful coincidence of events that on the Sabbath of this Zionist convention marking the thirteenth anniversary of Israel's establishment as a state, we read in the Haftarah the vision of the future redemption as seen by the Prophet of the Exile, known to us as the Second Isaiah. In this vision he sees Jerusalem reestablished as the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. "And they shall call you 'the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'" He summons the 'city of the Lord' yet engulfed in darkness, "Arise, shine for Thy light has come." The glory of the Lord that is to rise in Zion will not only illumine the path of its own people, but it will bring light to the other nations. "And nations shall walk by your light and Kings by the brightness of your rising."

What will be the character and the quality of the people gathered in and round about the new Zion, reflecting God's glory to the nations of the world? From the midst of his vision the Prophet describes the newly redeemed people. "Thy people shall be all of them righteous, and shall possess the land forever."

These latter words describing the character of the Jewish people gathered in Zion came to have a special significance in the history of Jewish thought. These words with their consequent interpretation have a particular relevance to this Zionist convention. Yet the earliest Sages of the

Talmud, the Tannaim of the Mishnah, noted the Prophet's emphasis on the word *kulam*, "all of them," meaning, the redeemed in Zion will be altogether righteous, without any exception.

Knowing well the frailty of human nature, the Sages must have asked themselves, "How is it possible that a multitude of people will be entirely righteous even under idyllic conditions?" They therefore understood the Prophet to be describing a special quality that inheres at all times in being a Jew. The Sages then linked with this verse a teaching that has become a fundamental doctrine in Judaism, second only to the doctrines of God's unity and revelation: *Kol Yisrael yesh lohem helek leolam habah*—"All Israel has a share in the world to come," which means that every Jew by virtue of being a Jew, even though he be without personal merit, even if he be a sinner, wins eternity. If you will, just by being a part of his people, a Jew has already fulfilled a divine destiny.

I hasten to add that the Sages did not mean, nor could they have meant within their religious frame of reference, that the Jew has exclusive rights to *Olam Habah*. This would have been a narrow and primitive chauvinism, not in keeping with their religious and ethical doctrines. To the contrary, in the Tosefta, the very same Sages admit to *Olam Habah* all the meritorious of the gentiles, that is, those who follow the fundamental rules of civilization, which are practically identical with the Ten Commandments. But here is the difference. With the gentiles, it is a matter of being deserving of *Olam Habah*, but with the Jew, it is nigh automatic. There is something so uniquely sacred in the Jewish people, that being a Jew, only being a part of the people, is in itself a matter of the greatest merit.

The Torah, the faith of the Jew that comprehends an entire way of life, the Torah that blends ethics and ritual in an extraordinary way, the Torah that teaches us how to distinguish between the sacred and profane in the ordinary rounds of daily life, this Torah cannot be sustained unless it is the covenant between a People and God, which means that an entire people becomes its surety. The possibility of the Torah's fulfillment, the hope that in time it will influence the nations of the world, becomes dependent on Israel's existence as a nation. Being a Jew, is this then not in itself a matter of the greatest merit? All the more so when to be a Jew means to become the target of hatred, of persecution, of scorn and of fear. To be faithful therefore to this people, to stand up and be counted as a part of it, is in itself an act of the highest worth.

There was some hesitation at first by the Rabbis to ascribe merit indiscriminately to every Jew. In his comments on the verse in Deuteronomy made in the Academy, "Thou art children to the Lord your God," Rabbi Judah set up criteria of selection: "When you conduct yourselves as befitting God's children then you are called His children, otherwise you have no right to this title." The great Rabbi Meir thereupon rose to reject any distinction between one Jew and another: *Bein kach ubein kach atem kruyim banim*, "Whatever be your worth, you are called God's children." No doubt Rabbi Meir spoke out of his own experiences, having seen that the foes of the Jews never made any distinction in their hatred between a meritorious Jew and an undeserving one. Rabbi Meir's opinion prevailed in the Academy. We hazard the guess that in time Rabbi Judah saw the wisdom of Rabbi Meir's view.

It was in this period when the Tannaim gave this notable interpretation to the words of our Haftarah, "Every Jew has a portion in the world to come, for it is written 'Thy people are altogether righteous,'" that a new voice was gaining volume and strength. It was the voice that came originally from one who was nurtured at the feet of the Pharisees, the apos-

tate Saul of Tarsus later known as the Apostle Paul. The new teaching of Paul challenged to the depths this very doctrine of the Rabbis that came to be associated with the words of our Haftorah. It was Paul who demanded to separate the people from the Torah, and then for the sake of the Torah give up the people. The faith of the Jew is not dependent on the people. Why burden this faith, he asked, with the problems of a people? Purge the Torah of its particularities, its national elements, and its national context, then it will be acceptable to many nations. Indeed, Paul envisioned it to become in this new form the universal faith.

The Rabbis repulsed with all their might this enticing offer. They well knew that as abstract doctrine directed to the universal heart of man the Torah would be subject to the caprices of the heart and the vacillations of the mind. Only if the Torah is a part of a faithful, loving people, only when the uniqueness of a people is impressed on the ways of this faith, can the Torah be sustained. As to becoming a universal faith, only when a people dedicates its national being to the Torah will the words of our Prophet, "And nations shall walk by Thy light," ever be realized. It was then that the doctrine of the primacy of the Jewish people was raised to a major spiritual principle, if not the major principle, in Judaism.

In a collection of Midrashim about the Prophet Elijah, known as *Tana debei Eliyahu*, there is a story that strikingly conveys the attitude of the Rabbis to Jewish peoplehood. You are familiar, I am certain, with the legend that Elijah is able to resolve all difficult problems. One day, the Midrashic story relates, Elijah appeared in a market place in Judea. A shopkeeper recognized him and hastened to his side to lay before him a difficult problem. "In my heart I have two loves, and I love them both passionately. They are the Torah and the Jewish people. My problem is, O Prophet, which one should come first?" Elijah then said, "I daresay that most people would answer you that the Torah comes first. But I say unto you, *Yisrael kedoshim kodmin*, the sacred Jewish people comes first."

It was left to the Hassidic sect to reach the highest rung in the love of

the Jewish people. Only a saint whose faith in God was sure and whose devotion to Torah was unwavering could have uttered these words; from other lips it would have been blasphemous. Rabbi Schneour Zalman, the founder of the Lubavitcher dynasty, was asked by a disciple, "Rebbe, what is greater, love of God or love of the Jewish people?" And the Rebbe's answer was, "*Ahavat Yisrael*, the love of the Jewish people."

A century ago, the entire question of the dependence of Torah on people was reopened. Again the old questions were asked, "Should not Judaism be separated from its people and turned into a universal faith?" "Why must this faith with such universal appeal be chained to a people with all of its peculiar loyalties and its historic disabilities?" Some of those who posed these questions were admittedly sincere. Influenced by the new cosmopolitan spirit, they sought a wider scope for their religious faith. Others asked this question for selfish reasons. They feared, whether consciously or subconsciously expressed, that an insistent Jewish national loyalty would endanger their status as citizens of their adopted countries. Still others, coming not from the midst of the Jews, concealed in these questions their own hostility against the Jewish people. From many sides and from many directions, the primacy of the Jewish people in Judaism's system of values was challenged.

It was the Zionest movement and only the Zionist movement that throughout this period preached the reality of the Jewish people and insisted on the doctrine of its primacy. Every religious Jew should feel himself beholden to the Zionist movement even in its most secular form. Because this movement upheld in the darkest hours of our peoplehood the fulfillment of *Ahavat Yisrael*.

By the grace of God, thirteen years ago the state of Israel was established, marking the realization in great part of our Zionist hopes and dreams. Is the reality of the Jews as a people now beyond dispute? Are we now minded to accept unhesitatingly the doctrine of the primacy of the Jewish people?

A noted sociologist studying the Jewish scene in America has called attention to the rapid realignment

of the Jewish group. The ethnic and the national characteristics of the Jews living here are fading away, and the Jewish group is emerging as a purely religious entity, a denominational community. What a direct attack could not do two thousand years ago nor a century ago, the social and political conditions in this country are doing, separating religion from people and transforming the Jews into a denomination. I as a Rabbi who hold dear and precious the Torah and the Synagogue fear this developing denominationalism. How long can Judaism live under such circumstances? How long can Judaism as a denomination resist the competition of other religions constituting a majority of the population, which claim only slight differences from it? Where will we find the anchor of a people's loyalty that can help a faith ride out the storm of doubt and disbelief? We have seen in our day the disappearance of great religious bodies because these faiths were not rooted in the people's national consciousness.

Judaism cannot live outside of the Jewish people. Denominationalism would be its death knell. In a way we should be grateful for the secular Jew, even for the Jewish atheist. Their very presence attests to our peoplehood. Albeit indirectly, they make secure the foundation of our religious life.

These thoughts on the nature of our peoplehood point to the great task now waiting to be performed by the Zionist Organization of America. Its work was not finished with the creation of the State of Israel thirteen years ago. This organization bears the main responsibility in this country of keeping before the American Jew the reality and primacy of his peoplehood.

In the dim past of the first exile, the Prophet known to us as the Second Isaiah envisioned the future of his people saying, "Your people shall be all of them righteous, and shall possess the land forever." To these words, the Rabbi linked the doctrine of the *primacy of the Jewish people* in our system of Jewish values. We pray that this Zionist Organization through its program and through its efforts will help achieve the vision and the doctrine.

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The *fourth* is, to give cheerfully, proportionately, and even unsolicited, but to put it in the poor man's hand, thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.

The *fifth* is, to give charity in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty, and know their benefactor, without their being known to him. Such was the conduct of some of our ancestors, who used to tie up money in the corners of their cloaks, so that the poor might take it unperceived.

The *sixth*, which rises still higher, is to know the objects of our bounty but remain unknown to them. Such was the conduct of those of our ancestors who used to convey their charitable gifts into poor people's dwellings, taking care that their own persons and names should remain unknown.

The *seventh* is still more meritorious, namely, to bestow charity in such a way that the benefactor may not know the relieved persons, nor they the names of their benefactors, as was done by our charitable forefathers during the existence of the temple. For there was in that holy building a place called the Chamber of the Silent, wherein the good deposited secretly whatever their generous hearts suggested, and from which the poor were maintained with equal secrecy.

Lastly, the *eighth*, and the most meritorious of all, is to anticipate charity by preventing poverty; namely, to assist the reduced fellow man, either by a considerable gift, or a sum of money, or by teaching him a trade, or by putting him in the way of business, so that he may earn an honest livelihood, and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding out his hand for charity * * * This is the highest step and the summit of charity's golden ladder.

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